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ABSTRACT

The Agitation for civil rights by black Americans during the 1960's caused many colleges and universities to reassess their recruitment and admissions policies. This reassessment took place primarily at the undergraduate level. Many articles, monographs, and books appeared that considered the merits of preferential admissions for disadvantaged students and described procedures for recruitment and remedial programs. Within the last few years, the discussion has moved to the involvement of graduate and professional schools in the education of minority group students in general, including blacks, Chicanos, and American Indians. This paper examines some of the literature that deals with efforts to increase the numbers of minority students enrolling in post-baccalaureate medical, legal, and graduate programs. (Author)

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Minorities and Advanced Degrees *by James Harvey*

The agitation for civil rights by black Americans during the 1960's caused many colleges and universities to reassess their recruitment and admissions policies. This reassessment took place primarily at the undergraduate level. Many articles, monographs, and books appeared that considered the merits of preferential admissions for "disadvantaged" students and described procedures for recruitment and remedial programs.

Within the last few years, the discussion has moved to the involvement of graduate and professional schools in the education of minority group students in general, including blacks, Chicanos, and American Indians. This paper examines some of the literature that deals with efforts to increase the numbers of minority students enrolling in post-baccalaureate medical, legal, and graduate programs.

The problem of increasing minority representation in research, teaching, and the professions is serious. The Carnegie Commission (*From Isolation to Mainstream. . .*, 1970) reported that only 2 percent of practicing physicians in the United States in 1969 were black. Although 2.8 percent of M.D. candidates were black, the majority were enrolled at Howard University and Meharry, the country's two black medical schools. The Commission noted further that although there was one white attorney for every 750 white Americans, there was only one black attorney for every 5,000 black Americans. James Bryant (*A Survey of Black American Doctorates . . .*, 1970) reported in 1968 that only 294 or 0.8 percent of the 37,456 doctorates awarded between 1964 and 1968 were awarded to black Americans. "If this is representative of the number of Ph.D.'s granted by higher education throughout the country, the annual number of new black Ph.D.'s would have to be multiplied by 15 in order to reach 11.5 percent, the estimated ratio of black Americans in the general population." Half of the doctorates received were in the field of education.

Data from the American Council on Education (Creager, *The American Graduate Student. . .*, 1971) and the Office of Education ("Higher Education Data. . .," 1971) is not much more encouraging. Over 92 percent of the graduate and professional degree students enrolled were reported as Caucasian. The rest represented all minority groups, including Oriental. "Higher Education Data" figures (see table next page) indicate that although for every nine White Anglo undergraduate students there was one graduate student, there was one graduate student for only every 13 minority students in general and 16 black students in particular.

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Historical Problems

The underrepresentation of minorities in graduate and professional programs is not an historical accident. The black population is the group that is almost fortunate in being the only group that can be used as an example, since it is the only group for which undergraduate opportunities were provided.

The Carnegie Commission (*From Isolation to Mainstream . . .*, 1971) has reported that as late as 1947 possibly up to 90% of black degree holders received their degrees in black institutions in the South. The inadequacies of these colleges in terms of the traditionally accepted norms in higher education have been documented. Just one commentary (Godard, *The Negro and Higher Education in the South*, 1967) covers poorly prepared administrators and faculty, inadequate curriculum, and inadequate finances. The Carnegie Commission report notes that these institutions have had to deal with students from extremely low socioeconomic backgrounds who were inadequately prepared for college.

Some defenders of the contributions of black colleges have resented this type of analysis, saying it ignores "the special conditions and circumstances surrounding this special group of colleges." (LeMelle and LeMelle, 1969)

Indeed, Sorkin (1969, 1971) indicated that historically black state colleges in the South do not differ greatly from the white state institutions (excluding universities) in such characteristics as Ph.D.'s on the faculty, libraries, and student-to-faculty ratio, although the gap between private white colleges and private black colleges is substantial.

Nevertheless, graduate programs leading to the Ph.D. and professional schools have not attracted black students in sufficient numbers. Either because of the length of time required or financial problems or racism, black students tend to enter elementary or secondary teaching and clerical professions rather than college teaching or medicine and law.

Aspiration of Undergraduates

One reason that cannot be plausibly advanced for the underrepresentation of minority groups in post-baccalaureate training is lack of interest. Again, unfortunately, only the black undergraduate has been studied.

The two major studies relating to black undergraduates are remarkably consistent (Davis, *Great Aspirations . . .*, 1964; and Fichter, *Graduates of Predominantly Negro Colleges . . .*, n.d.). Both concluded that black undergraduates had higher aspirations than their white counterparts for graduate and professional study. Fichter also added that "male Negroes are more likely than male whites to work for a master's degree, [white males] aim at professional degrees and the doctorate." Both studies concluded that although aspiration was higher, blacks were more likely to postpone further studies than white students because of financial problems. Bayer and Boruch (*The*

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Black Student in American Colleges . . ., 1969) confirm the findings that black students' aspirations for post-baccalaureate work are higher and that more non-black students aspired to professional degrees.

Socioeconomic status of black students may account for these differences. It is generally conceded in the literature that simply entering college heightens the self-esteem of the poor black student. It is possible that having come so far, his hopes for further advancement through education are heightened initially, only to taper off later. Fichter's data indicated that while few more black students than white contemplated further education as freshmen, the black students' aspirations declined while the white students' increased through college.

A National Merit Scholarship Corporation study of bright black students indicated the same finding. Although large percentages of these students as high school juniors planned careers in the sciences and the professions, 2 1/2 years later very large declines in these interests were recorded, with corresponding gains in the social sciences and education–the "traditional" areas of interest for blacks. High SEB blacks, however, were overwhelmingly interested in graduate education, especially in doctoral programs.

Law Schools

The law schools in the United States have undertaken an impressive effort to increase the number of minority group students. In addition, possibly the best examples of the debate involved in admitting minority group students–intellectual and legal problems–have been provided by the law schools.

The debate on student abilities was crystallized in an exchange of letters between an alumnus of the Yale Law School and its Dean, published in *The Public Interest* in 1970. The alumnus, Macklin Fleming, after hearing of the law school's efforts to increase black representation in each class to 10%, wrote the Dean, Louis Pollak, outlining his opposition:

- As the Dean testified, many of the students did not meet traditional admissions standards
- The Law School was on its way to establishing two law schools under one roof
- Underqualified black students would have instilled in them a sense of inferiority, since they would be unable to compete adequately with white students
- This sense of inferiority would result in demands to change the standards of the school further, as well as aggressive conduct
- A quota policy will ultimately hurt over-represented groups such as Jewish students, since "discrimination in favor of X is automatic discrimination against Y"
- Other good regional law schools exist that could serve black students' needs without the competition at Yale.

Pollak's reply insisted that law school admissions standards were not precise enough to predict success accurately in all instances; noting that the Admissions Committee at the Law School had always sought to select applicants presenting evidence of unusual promise, which was not always evident from traditional indices of potential. In answer to fears that the academic quality of the Law School would be diluted, Pollak answered that this was unlikely with a small percentage of minority students–even if they were underprepared–and that the problem would diminish as more fully-qualified students, in the traditional sense, were recruited.

Acting on concerns such as Pollak's–as well as a belief expressed by Robert O'Neil ("Preferential Admissions . . ., 1971) that minority groups need representation by lawyers who grew up in ghettos, barrios, or slums and returned to practice–American law schools have attempted to increase minority representation through the Council on Legal Education Opportunities (CLEO).

CLEO, sponsored by the American and National Bar Associations, the Association of American Law Schools, and the Law School Admission Test Council, has received support from both the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. The Council operates summer institute programs for junior and senior undergraduates to improve the preparation of all minority group students for the study of law.

Since 1968, CLEO (Association of American Law Schools Annual Report, 1971) has conducted 29 regional summer institutes for 1,025 students. Of the 940 students successfully completing the institutes, 896 have enrolled in 110 law schools with financial grants.

Opponents of preferential admissions to law schools for minority group students have acted on arguments like Pollak's or Arthur Jensen's (*Toledo Law Review*, 1970), and have taken the problem to court. A white honors student successfully sued the University of Washington for reverse racial discrimination for denying him admission while accepting the applications of 30 minority group students with lower qualifications. The issue has been appealed, so a final determination of the legality of preferential admission–in law schools or elsewhere–is yet to come.

Medical Schools

The issues involved in the admission of minority group students to medical schools are similar to law school admissions with some unique variations. Dove ("Maintaining Standards. . .," 1970), asked to comment on the problem of maintaining standards while admitting minority group students, insisted that the question implied the acceptance of traditional standards as "adequate," and that being a member of a minority group in no way guaranteed inferiority academically.

The Carnegie Commission (*Higher Education and the Nation's Health. . .*, 1970) notes that medical students traditionally have come from the middle and upper classes. The Commission and Caruthers ("Admissions and Financial Aid. . .," 1971) both cite that until recently over 90% of black physicians received their training from Howard or Meharry Medical Colleges. Even today, says Caruthers, these two schools, representing 2% of the nation's medical schools, enroll one-quarter of the black medical students in the country.

Minorities in Postbaccalaureate Training

	Amer. Indian		Black		Oriental		Span-Surn		Total Minority		White-Anglo		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Grad. & prof. stds.	1,608	0.3	22,302	4.1	9,662	1.8	6,297	1.2	39,869	7.3	503,281	92.7	543,150	100.0
Non-undergr. med. stdts.	47	0.1	1,845	4.2	789	1.8	363	0.8	3,044	6.9	40,914	93.1	43,958	100.0
Non-undergr. dental stdts.	.21	0.1	597	3.6	296	1.8	127	0.8	1,041	6.2	15,696	93.8	16,737	100.0
Non-undergr. law stdts.	193	0.3	2,552	3.9	317	0.5	702	1.1	3,764	5.8	61,107	94.2	64,871	100.0

Minority groups also have a special need for doctors of their own background. Vincent Charles ("Admissions and Financial Aid. . .," 1971) states that in the 1960's, following riots in major urban areas, white doctors left the cities where blacks and Puerto Ricans are increasingly concentrated. Serving the medical needs of these groups means increasing their numbers in medical schools. An additional problem identified by Cogan (*Negroes for Medicine . . .*, 1968) is that:

> Those Negroes who do make it through medical school are often forced by financial problems to enter private practice immediately after their internships; consequently, only a small percentage of Negro graduates have been certified by the Specialty Boards.

Medicine also differs from legal or graduate education in that although virtually any undergraduate program will adequately prepare a student for legal education, medical education requires, at a minimum, a heavy undergraduate concentration in the sciences. If the minority student has not covered these requirements, or the program available to him is weak, extensive remedial work will be required of him prior to entering medical school.

Advocates of increasing minority enrollment in medical schools have therefore attacked the problem from two fronts: they have attempted to identify talented minority students as early as junior high school so as to encourage their interest in medicine and ensure their adequate preparation (Kahn, *Admission of the Disadvantaged . . .*, 1970); and they have developed special summer college programs and post-graduate remedial work to improve the preparation of black college students.

The need for early identification and encouragement is probably the most practical and necessary approach. As Cogan notes, high school counselors can easily dissuade black students from careers in medicine by merely adding up the total number of years required to pursue a speciality, not to mention the financial burden and delayed job-market entrance that results in a loss of income. Moreover, the falling aspirations of undergraduate black students have an impact on those interested in medicine. The American Association of Medical Schools ("Report of the Association. . .," 1970) reports that although 6% of black college freshmen express an interest in a medical career (compared to 4% for white students), there is only a 25% chance that the black student will even become an applicant to medical school, compared to a 35% chance for the white student.

The same task force recommended increasing minority group representation from 3.8% in 1970-71 to 12% by 1975-76, which implied a rise of minority student first-year enrollment to at least 1,800 students by 1975-76. The figure should be within reach: the minorities division of AAMC ("Thirty-three Programs to Increase. . .," 1971) reported that the number of first-year medical students from minority groups increased from 497 in 1968-69 to 1,084 in 1970-71.

Graduate Programs

Recognition of the need to enroll minority group students in post-baccalaureate programs appears to have dawned on graduate schools earlier than the professional schools. A substantial portion of the 1963 Council on Graduate Schools (CGS) Annual Meeting was devoted to the topic.

The 8th Annual Meeting of CGS also held a panel on the disadvantaged student in graduate school which included a lengthy description of one of the more broad-based attempts to increase their numbers, the Harvard-Yale-Columbia Summer Studies Program. This program offered sophomores, juniors, and seniors from predominantly black colleges intensive summer remedial work in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences in order to orient them to graduate school, develop their confidence to handle the demands of graduate education, and prepare them to compete equally for scholarships. One great advantage as seen by its sponsors was that it did not lengthen the educational program of the minority student by requiring a year of post-graduate work. Over one-half of the students participating in the late '60's went on to graduate work.

One of the surveys used to demonstrate that graduate schools have made significant efforts to increase the percentages of minority students on their campuses was published by ETS (Parry, "A Survey of Programs. . .," 1970). On closer examination of the figures, however, it is not conclusive that significant efforts have been made. Two hundred eighty-seven questionnaires were mailed to graduate schools, and of the 254 returned, 150 indicated that their schools were doing something in the area of minority student recruitment and admissions. However, only 89 of these schools could answer that they had some "definable" procedures, and even some of these schools answered with reservations. Other answers indicate that the "definable" procedures may not differ much from regular recruitment procedures—mailing literature to undergraduate departments, visiting campuses, and personal contact.

Once on campus, minority graduate students express the same concerns that spokesmen for the professional school minority students have expressed. Several students at the 1969 Annual Meeting of the Western Association of Graduate Schools expressed the feelings that graduate education must be relevant to their own interests, that they felt conflicting emotions over retaining their minority background while attempting to enter an elite profession, and that they resented being asked to assume the role of spokesman or super-representative of their racial group.

As with the professional schools, to the minority student interested in pursuing a graduate program financial obstacles are great. Preston Valien, the Office of Education, informed a Lake Arrowhead Workshop of graduate deans (1969) that the ultimate solution to this problem would be a categorical program of graduate fellowships for minority group students. The Carnegie Commission (*From Isolation to Mainstream. . .*, 1971) has recommended the availability of educational opportunity grants of $2,000 for post-baccalaureate students. Many commentators note that the prestigious national fellowship programs that have been aimed at minority group students assist students who would qualify for institutional fellowships anyway.

Conclusions

In spite of some impressive gains for minority group students in graduate and professional programs, the suspicion remains that much of the claimed success is rhetoric. An ETS publication (*Graduate and Professional School Opportunities. . .*, 1971), while outlining an impressive array of special programs, when analyzed, shows that most graduate and professional schools have a long way to go to ensure adequate representation of minority groups. Law schools answering the ETS questionnaire demonstrate the best record. All of them estimated what percentage of their enrollment minority groups represented: twenty-eight law schools showed minority enrollment at 2% or less; 26 at between 3 and 5%; 19 at between 6 and 10%; 5 at between 11 and 15%; and 3 over 16% minority student enrollment.

Forty-eight graduate schools of arts and science did not estimate a percentage of enrolled minority group students, compared to only one medical school. The great majority of both groups indicated, however, that minority enrollment was under 5%.

To increase these percentages, it is absolutely necessary to increase the availability of special grant programs to minority students. Both graduate and professional school commentators say that minority students—often coming from a background distrustful of lenders—cannot be expected to weigh themselves down with loans, particularly if they have borrowed heavily to subsidize their undergraduate education. This necessity is particularly acute in legal education, which has no grant money available at all unless the student plans a teaching career in law.

But the availability of funds is only a temporary solution.

The long-term solution lies in improving the educational opportunities available to minority students at all levels, from pre-school to undergraduate. Education has often been referred to as a "seamless web." This is nowhere more apparent than in the problem of increasing minority student enrollment in post-baccalaureate programs. To expect impoverished minority-group students to spend their undergraduate summers in intensive remedial programs or to add an additional year to their undergraduate preparation is to expect a great deal.

The fact that so many of these students have undertaken these programs is a tribute to their persistence and motivation. However, the real answer lies in improving the teaching and facilities available to them so they can compete on an equal basis with the more affluent student who takes for granted these vital aspects of undergraduate experience.

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